

West Virginia "Letters" Project
WEST VIRGINIA INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

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SWAGO M. M. CHURCH

Soon after his marriage to Nancy Dyer in 1825, the
Mathews gathered a Sunday school in their home.
The scholars Isaac, Ruth and James McColles, Clifforne,
Jane, Elizabeth and Jonathan McNeill, and Joshua Buckley.
Mr. Mathews would read a chapter and offer prayer. Mrs.
McNeill did most of the teaching. The exercises would open
at ten o'clock, and there would be a recess at noon. In the
yard was an arbor formed by a luxuriant hop vine. Under its
shade the children would sit and enjoy their luncheon
brought from their homes. After noon the school would continue
for two or three hours. The summers of 1826 and 1827 were
spent in this useful manner.

This Sunday school was no doubt the very first ever held
at Swago. The Mathews, however, were Presbyterians.

The first M. E. class was held by John McNeill in an old
barn belonging to Mrs. Pheobe McNeill which was located on
the creek bottom just above her grist mill. According to
Fries History this John McNeill was the son of Jonathan
and Pheobe McNeill. It is hard to establish a date for the
organization of this class, but Jonathan McNeill died in 1825
leaving the mill to his wife Pheobe, so that it was in all
probability in the first half of the century, perhaps in
the 1830' or 40', for it was during the time that services
were held in this old barn that the 18 young people went from
the M. E. congregation to hear the first M. P. preacher
who came to Swago around 1840, and were expelled from the

See history
of Bethel
Church, Swago

M. A. Church for going to hear this new kind of Methodist.

After the civil war, they used the school house on the Dry branch of Swage, which was called the Dry Creek school. This school house also has the distinction of being the first public free school in the county. This school house was used for religious worship until in 1873 when the present church was built. George Wainless was one of the first preachers. The present church was built by Jeff Millingsworth and Oliver McKeever, carpenters, under the pastorate of Rev. Harper. The men of the community took turns in donating a weeks free work as assistants to the carpenters. The money was donated by the people. The deed for the lot was given by Reuben S. Overholt and his wife Theobald Ann Overholt, to John Auldridge, Isaac Adkison, George W. Beverage, Reuben Overholt, James Moore, John Duffield, Clark Kellison, and G. B. VanReenan, trustees.

There are no old class books to be found for any of the churches on the Edray circuit, so it is impossible to get a complete list of the members, but some of them as remembered by older people are Jennie Armstrong, Betsy Kellison, Clark Kellison, Mrs. Clark Kellison, John Auldridge, Mrs. John Auldridge, Nancy Auldridge, George Sheets, Lettie Beverage, Lucy Beverage, John Beverage, Catherine Armstrong, James McShellan, Nancy McShellan, George Kellison, Mrs. George Kellison, George McKeever, Mildred McKeever, and Jane Wendermilk.

Clark Kellison was the Supt., and class leader for many years, or until his death. When these duties were taken over by his son Porter Kellison. Other church workers were G. D.

Worcester, Aaron Moore, A. W. Angere, G. W. Armstrong, A. A.
Rucker and Mrs. A. A. Rucker, Thelma Warner.

The present trustees are Austin Munson, William A. Angere,
John V. Killion and May Killion. Another trustee is to be
appointed to fill the vacancy of Porter Killion recently
deceased. Mrs. A. A. Rucker another of their main workers also
died this winter.

At this church is an old Bible dated 1847 that was presented
to the congregation by Rev. A. V. Price.

from-- John P. Buckley
Mrs. Joe Fernell.
Mrs. Nancy McNeill